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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 1526
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE 0192
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH IMMEDIATE 0596
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 0058
RUEKDAI/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA// IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// IMMEDIATE
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE
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S E C R E T ANKARA 004279

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2026
TAGS: [PARM](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [SY](#) [IS](#) [TU](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY INSPECTS SUSPECT FLIGHT FROM IRAN TO SYRIA

REF: A. ANKARA 4253
[1](#)B. STATE 119421
[1](#)C. STATE 118622
[1](#)D. STATE 118476
[1](#)E. ANKARA 4223

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Carl Siebentritt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) State Ops alerted us July 23 that the Syrians may once again be attempting to fly an IL-76 with suspect cargo from Iran to Syria. We contacted MFA Head of Department for Aviation Affairs Hamit Olcay, who informed us that the flight approaching Turkey was actually an Iranian civilian carrier, Pars, claiming to be carrying humanitarian supplies. Olcay told us the GOT had granted overflight clearance, but only on the condition that the aircraft land in Diyarbakir (in southeast Turkey) and submit to inspection. The plane was not yet in Turkish airspace. Olcay promised to call us back with the result.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Olcay later notified us that Turkish security officials had thoroughly inspected the plane and found 20 tons of food and medical supplies and three ambulances. The GOT permitted the aircraft to fly to Syria. We thanked Olcay for the GOT's vigilance.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) DAO also discussed the issue with RADM Polat of the TGS J2. Polat surmised that the GOT's decision to grant overflight clearance -- but subject to inspection of the cargo -- was an attempt by the GOT to diplomatically say "no" to military equipment transiting Turkey but not risk a confrontation with Iran over the issue. Polat told DAO that he expected Turkey would treat future suspect flights from Iran in the same fashion.

[1](#)4. (S/NF) COMMENT: The GOT has taken a strongly negative line against Israel's military action in Lebanon, calling for an immediate cease-fire and the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Lebanese people. The GOT may be seeking to

cover both its flanks by allowing humanitarian aid to pass through Turkey while ensuring that nothing nefarious is getting through. We will follow up with the GOT in the coming days on this issue.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON